A brief history
Of the
Malikpur Dewan family

Written by Rajul Abdullah

Co-President of Naogaon History Society

Copyright © 2026 Naogaon History Society Publications

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without the written permission of the author.

Preface- Message from the publisher

The purpose of this publication is to highlight and record the history of the Malikpur Dewan family in Barshail Union, Naogaon Sadar. I felt as though due to the family's profound contribution to the spiritual lives of many residents of the Naogaon region, that they deserve a publication about them from the Naogaon History Society. To add to the case, the family has produced several figures that have had impact on society in recent years, such as Colonel Farook who was one of the most prominent people to be born in Naogaon Sadar in modern-day times. This led me to conduct research about this family by visiting them and looking into historical Hadhrami migrations and now, it is with great humility, that I, Rajul Abdullah, Co-President of the Naogaon History Society present what I have been able to find out about this family.

Rajul Abdullah
Co-President
Naogaon History Society
5th February 2026

The ancestral origin of the family

The family descends from a Sufi pir by the name of Syed Ali Al-Edrus, he was a missionary who had come to settle into East Bengal from the port city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat of Western India around three-hundred years ago. He was born in the city Tarim in Yemen and belonged to the Al-Edrus family who take their descent from Syed Abu Bakr Al-Edrus, the Mawla, the patron saint of Aden, also a city in Yemen, this Syed Abu Bakr was a scion of the Ba ‘Alawi tribe who are well-recorded descendants of Ja’far Al-Sadiq, the renowned scholar-descendant of Husayn ibn Ali, the martyr of Karbala, through his youngest son Ali Al-Uraydi. The surname ‘Al-Edrus’, derives from the word ‘Edrus’ which can mean lion in the Arabic language, and it can also mean leader of the Sufis, Syed Abu Bakr was called this as he was considered one of the leaders of the Sufis of Yemen at his time, and because of his passionate and fierce manner of preaching.

It was a tradition of the gnostic members of the Al-Edrus family to come into Gujarat at least once in their lifetimes as it was started by a member, Syed Abdullah Al-Edrus who was a pioneer of Hadhrami Da’wah across the Indian Ocean and came to Gujarat in the early 16th century. Members of the Al-Edrus family would often either return back to Tarim, or remain in Gujarat, or travel to other places for Da’wah. Ancestor of the Malikpur Dewan family, Syed Ali Al-Edrus also followed in with this tradition, he arrived in Ahmedabad, Gujarat accompanied by family members at the end of the 17th century, and he participated in the missionary network and effort put up by the Al-Edrus family and other Ba ‘Alawi sada families, though the Al-Edrus family were the grand majority of the Yemeni migrants.

Syed Ali Al-Edrus decided to travel through the subcontinent, going through all the way to East Bengal, where he settled in the Rajshahi region, which really was quite exactly on the opposite side to his place of initial stay, Ahmedabad in Gujarat. Upon coming into Rajshahi, he gained a sizable following, and played a role in the Islamisation of the locality. He would be remembered in Rajshahi Sufi-memory by a few titles, the first of which was ‘Zinda Pir’, literally meaning living saint, he was called this because he was like his ancestor Syed Abu Bakr, he would also be very fierce in his speech when he was preaching as this was something established in the family’s Tariqa, the second title that Sufis of the area remember

him by is ‘Hazrat Shukr’, this is because he was known as a man who was very thankful to God, to the extent that he was a role-model on how to be so. Upon settling into Rajshahi, his sons married into the local populace, and they are the origin of the Malikpur Dewan clan who have been living in Naogaon for around 10-11 generations since the arrival of Syed Ali. They maintain their status as a Pir family and are known by two names; ‘Dewan’, a common title given to Sufi leaders in North Bengal, and ‘Edrusi’, their original surname inherited from their ancestor Zinda Pir. The Pirs of the family to this day still maintains the ‘Tariqa Edrusiyya’, in outward appearance as in clothing and facial hair, following in with the ruling of the Hadhrami-Shafi’i school of the Imamah and that only the hair on the chin suffices as the beard, they also maintain the inward aspects of the Tariqa as with regards to Dhikr. The preservation of these traditions come from the appointment of a ‘Khalifa’, a successor by the Pir of the family.

Connected families

The ancestors of the family having coming from a heavily stratified Hadhrami society, had brought along the culture of ‘Kafa’ah’, that is eligibility in lineage for marriage in the Shafi’i school, that is a non-Arab may not marry an Arab, a non-Kinani may not marry a Kinani, and a non-Qurayshi may not marry a Qurayshi, and in more strict interpretations, a non-Hashimi may not marry a Hashimi, and descendants of Hasan and Husayn may not marry other than the descendants of Hasan and Husayn. Though this ruling generally only applies to females, it is binding to a lesser degree for males. Having come into Bengal where there is a lack of verified records of lineage, and Arabs in general, this was not practical to a great extent. Nevertheless, the family would marry into surrounding families of social prominence, generally only families claiming the Syed descent i.e. descent from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, though these claims were often far from reliable. This culture of the family has faded significantly in the presence of the twentieth century were upon they have become much more exogamous.

They have for example, married extensively into the Dewan family of Kanupur in the Akkelpur area of Joypurhat who house the Dargah, shrine of a nineteenth-century Sufi-related figure named Hazrat Syed Moujud Ali Dewan who belonged to the Chishti order prevalent in the Indian Subcontinent, they have also produced local poets, Syed Mohsin Ali Dewan and

Syed Emdad Ali Dewan. The Malikpur clan have also had instances of marriage with the Dewan family of Jamalganj in Naogaon who trace their descent to a Central Asian saint known as Dewan Syed Ya'qub Ali Bukhari who had arrived in the region alone as a missionary in the early 19th century and have been living the area for around 6-7 generations. They have also married into the Khandakar family of Fakir Para, also claiming the Syed descent, and also are a Pir family, though such individuals from the family are known as 'Fakirs' and such is the name of their family's neighbourhood. There has also been intermarriage with the Jotedar-Kazi family of Itakhola, Khetlal Upazila who have been substantial landowners who had a point in history had possession of almost all of Khetlal Upazila, they are also known for building the Itakhola Kazi Para Masjid around 250 years ago which is known for it's Mughal-style architecture, the first Muslim man in to have received an university degree in the Bogra region hailed from this family, his name was Syed Riyazuddin Kazi and has a road named after him in Bogra city.

In modern times, a faction of the family with army-connections have also married into the Zamindar 'Khan' family of Jamalpur in Mymensingh who trace their lineage to a Turani, a Turkic soldier of the Mughal Empire who was awarded vast lands in Mymensingh by the Mughal governors for his service in the army.

Famous figures of the family in recent times

One name that gives a new kind of attention to the family and Malikpur village in Naogaon Sadar is Colonel Farook, a name hated by many and at the same time held in high esteem by many. Colonel Farook, known formally as Syed Farook Rahman was a figure who fought in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 after deserting his post as a commissioned soldier in the Pakistan Army, he would later 'mastermind' the assassination plot of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a revered figure by many Bangladeshis, after accumulating resentment for his regime which allegedly was growing increasingly corrupt and brutalistic in it's governance. Farook would later found the Freedom Party and run as a presidential candidate against military-dictator Muhammad Hussain Ershad in the 1986 Presidential Election. Farook would eventually be jailed in 1996 upon Awami League's return to power, then being executed on 28 January 2010. Farook was son of Syed Ataur Rahman, an army doctor awarded with the rank of Major, his grandfather was Ishratullah Dewan, a Pir of the Malikpur Dewan family and seventh generation descendant of Syed Ali Al-Edrus.

Another famous figure is Syeda Yasmin, who is also a sister of Farook, she is a pioneering figure in female-involvement in aviation in the Indian Subcontinent and is considered to have been the first female pilot of Bangladesh, though some sources differ and give that appellation to Kaniz Rokshana, another pioneer instead. She though however was Biman Airlines' first female commander and was sacked along with her husband due to 'public interest' in events related to her brother, Syed Farook Rahman.

Another well-known figure in the area is Dewan Shahid Hasan son of Dewan Fazlur Rahman who fought in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Another figure involved in the liberation war from the family was Dewan Mejbah-ul-Manzoor Farid, an army doctor who treated injured freedom fighters at the Balurghat Freedom Fighters Camp, he was also grandson of Ishratullah Dewan, making him Syed Farook Rahman's paternal first cousin.

The state of the family in recent times

The Malikpur Dewan clan are in number, a few thousand people, they in majority remain largely rural in their home village in Barshail Union, Naogaon Sadar. They have in recent times taken initiative to start a school and orphanage in the area named Zinda Pir Hazrat Shukr (R.) Hafezia Noorani Madrasa.

Photos of the family

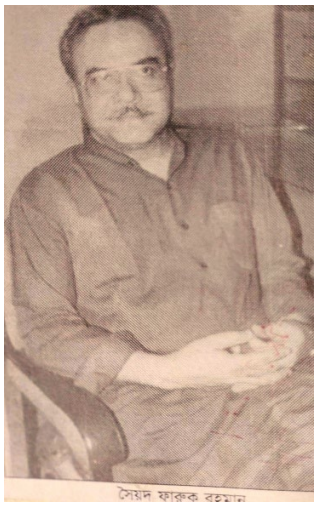

Photo of Syed Farooq Rahman

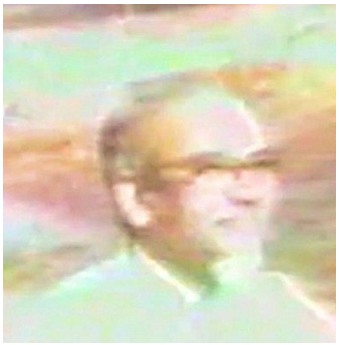

Photo of Syed Ataur Rahman

Photo of Dewan Mejbah-ul-Manzoor Farid